

Message Text

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22

ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 OPIC-03 CIAE-00 INR-07

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DRAFTED BY AF/W:BSKIRKPATRICK:IW

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EB/ICD/ISM:BMILLER (INFO)

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R 302340Z OCT 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 268232

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: EMIN, US, GV

SUBJECT: BETHLEHEM STEEL INTEREST IN GUINEA

1. HERBERT J. ASHE, GENERAL MANAGER, INTERNATIONAL MINING DEPARTMENT, BETHLEHEM STEEL CORPORATION, AND JORGE SCHNEIDER OF THE SAME DEPARTMENT, CALLED ON AF/W KIRKPATRICK AND HOUDEK OCTOBER 27 FOR INFORMATION ON POSSIBILITIES OF EXPLORING FOR MANGANESE AND IRON ORE IN SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY GUINEA. THEY HAD HEARD FROM SOURCE IN FREETOWN THAT INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN GUINEA OPENING UP TO FOREIGNERS AND WISHED TO CHECK OUT THIS STORY WITH THE DEPARTMENT. WE POINTED OUT THAT FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN GUINEA IS LIMITED BUT THAT THE HALCO INVESTMENT IN BAUXITE MINING HAD TURNED OUT WELL SO FAR. SCHNEIDER WONDERED IF RESUMPTION OF FRENCH RELATIONS WITH THE GOG WOULD RESULT IN MORE FRENCH INVESTMENT. WE INDICATED THIS REAL POSSIBILITY. WE POINTED OUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF DOING BUSINESS IN CONAKRY, BUT NOTED HALCO EXPERIENCE INDICATES THEY DO NOT PRECLUDE SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

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2. SCHNEIDER ASKED ABOUT TOURE'S HEALTH, NOTING THAT HE HAD

HEARD FROM A FRENCH DOCTOR WHOSE BROTHER HAD TREATED TOURE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO THAT TOURE WAS IN POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION. WE REPLIED THAT WE HAD NO RECENT INFORMATION ON TOURE'S HEALTH.

3. AFTER LEAVING AF/W, ASHE AND SCHNEIDER WENT TO SEE AMBASSADOR BAH. HE ENCOURAGED THEM TO COME TO GUINEA TO LOOK INTO THE INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES. BETHLEHEM EXECUTIVES LIMITED THEIR COMMENTS TO BAH TO EXPRESSIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST AND DID NOT REQUEST THAT HE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A VISIT.

4. SCHNEIDER INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH US AT A LATER DATE IF BETHLEHEM DECIDED TO SEND SOMEONE TO CONAKRY. WE INDICATED THAT, IN VIEW OF DIFFICULTIES OF DOING BUSINESS IN GUINEA, EMBASSY COULD BE OF INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE.

KISSINGER

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